

Notes and Comments.

What is Religion? Sometime ago the *Arrow*, a Protestant Episcopal paper published in New York, printed the weekly program of the Pro-Cathedral parish work, and made these comments: "This may be philanthropy, but it is not religion." To this the *Pro-Cathedral Record* made a very significant reply, showing that the religion of Christ is emphatically a religion of philanthropy. Here is a paragraph from the reply of the *Record*:

To us philanthropy and religion are very closely akin. The love of God that does not manifest itself in love to man is not worth having. We believe that the whole of man belongs to God—body, soul, and spirit. We believe that we are doing God's service when we give his children a chance to keep their bodies clean and strong and healthy, and their minds pure and elevated and refined in the midst of so much that tends to make them unclean and unhealthy and impure and degraded. We believe that the money, the time, the effort which we spend in the attempt to uplift the lives of the people of this neighborhood, to inspire in them nobler thoughts and higher ideals and truer acts, gives God more pleasure and is of more use in the world than the same money and time and effort spent in the erection of a beautiful church in which we might worship God in splendor and ease; in which, surrounded by all the accessories that appeal to our most refined tastes, we would be apt to forget the misery and sorrow of God's children in the world, and think we are doing God's service when we are really pleasing ourselves.

Why He Went In. An *exchange* relates the following incident in the life of a very successful New York pastor. The story is significant in that it shows that many people who attend church care far more for the *messenger* than for the *message*. Here it is:

One Sunday, a few weeks ago, he was ascending the steps of his Fifth Avenue church, when he was asked by an old lady, who did not recognize him, to help her up the steps. With his usual courtesy he complied with her request.

On reaching the top step she halted breathlessly, and asked him who was going to preach that day. "The Rev. Mr. Blanks," he replied, giving his own name. "Oh, dear," exclaimed the old lady "help me down again! I'd rather listen to a man sharpening a saw. Please help me down again; I reckon I won't go in."

The clergyman smiled, and gently assisted her down the steps, remarking, as he reached the last step, "I wouldn't go in, either, if I weren't the preacher."

Saved from What? Every four years, we are told by politicians that this country is to be "saved" by putting in power the party they represent. It might be well to ask these politicians from what they propose to save the country. There are many things from which this country needs to be saved, but they are not mentioned in the platforms written by these politicians. Speaking of the custom of "saving the country" every four years, the *Christian Evangelist* of St. Louis, very truthfully says:

The country needs to be saved from intermeddling officials to the Roman Catholic Church, such as Ireland. It needs to be saved from the hordes of ignorant and besotted emigrants that are annu-

ally dumped on our shores. It needs to be saved from even a slight union of church and state. It needs to be saved from frequent conflicts between labor and capital. It needs to be saved from the tentacles of sundry mammoth corporations which have laid hold of it. It needs to be saved from the domination of the saloon. But the thousands of shrieking, perspiring, leather-lunged and copper-stomached patriots are not troubled about these things, and they are not mentioned in the party platforms. But they will be remembered, we trust, by hundreds of thousands of true patriots who vote this fall.

The Remedy. The cry of "Hard times" is everywhere heard. Thousands of people are out of employment and in actual want for the necessities of life. What is wrong? Why should there be hunger and starvation in this land of ours? What a bounteous harvest the people of this country have reaped. That there is something wrong somewhere is clear to all—where and what is it? What is the cure for "hard times?" The following from an *Exchange*, if carried out, will do more to improve our social condition than any other one thing:

If the American people could and would cut off the waste of the liquor traffic, and turn the \$1,200,000,000 sunk by it into the useful trades and industries of the country, it would be a comparatively short time until all who are willing to work would have employment, the factories, forges, furnaces and machine shops would hum, and the farmers would find a ready market for their products at living prices. When a man earns a dollar and then burns it or throws it into the river, he cannot buy bread, clothes, or furniture with it. No more can he do so if he spends his dollar in the saloon. The latter is as complete a waste as the former, and much more hurtful.

Sit Down and Think. Thought, conviction and action—these should follow one upon the other. Right actions are the legitimate outcome of right convictions and right convictions are born of right thoughts. People do not think enough, they do not take time to think as they ought. The *Northwestern Advocate* has a bit of advice that is much to the point at this time:

It is related of Bishop Thorold that once when on his way to meet an engagement he arrived on the station platform just in time to see the train moving out of the station. He was much disappointed at the thought of being late, and in distress turned to the person nearest at hand for sympathy and advice. "What am I to do, I should like to know?" he asked. The friendly porter addressed advanced a step or two, and as he touched his hat said, "There is another train in thirty-five minutes, and your lordship had best sit down and think." There is a valid and valuable lesson in the porter's suggestion for others than the bishop. It would be a helpful thing for society if people generally would take time to think current problems through. We are suffering from want of thought, and from its legitimate outcome, want of conviction.

God has been very merciful to some of us in never letting money come rolling in upon us, for most men are carried off their legs if they meet with a great wave of fortune. Many of us would have been bigger sinners if we had been trusted with larger purses.—*Spurgeon*.

Queries and Answers.

1. Is it inconsistent with the teachings of the Bible to ordain a person of holy fellowship to the Christian ministry on the Lord's Day?

In our judgment it is entirely consistent with the teachings of Holy Writ to ordain a minister on the Sabbath. The Saviour said, "It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." Visitation of the sick, the administration of baptism, confirmation, communion services—all these are eminently proper on the Sabbath Day.

2. What constitutes the greatest sin on earth?

It depends somewhat on what the author of the above query means by the 'greatest.' Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, supposed to be the unpardonable sin, would, perhaps, in some sense be the greatest sin. If however, the author meant that we should designate the *act* that constitutes the greatest sin, then, we confess our inability to answer. We doubt whether there be any such thing as the greatest sin.

3. Is it right to use a magic lantern at regular services to show Bible scenery?

We would think it better not to use a magic lantern at a regular preaching service unless the minister had a special subject which he could make clearer and present it more intelligently with the use of it. The church has a right to the use of all the means that will advance the kingdom of God and glorify his name on the earth.

4. What are the essential differences between the Brethren or Progressives as some call them and the German Baptists?

In doctrine there is practically no difference. The dress question was the main cause of the division.

5. Do the Brethren strictly adhere to Close Communion?

In a limited sense they do. That is to say, only scripturally baptized persons are proper subjects for Holy Communion.

6. Do the Brethren allow their members to take part in the meetings of other churches?

They do.

7. Are they as pronounced in their opposition to secret societies as the German Baptists?

The Brethren Church is on record as opposed to secret societies.

8. Do they teach plainness in dress aside from uniformity?

They teach and preach Gospel plainness, but the Church prescribes no form of dress for any of its members.